**PRESS RELEASE**

May 5, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Update: New Case of Hepatitis C Added to Ongoing Results of Testing for Bloodborne Virus Exposure**

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is continuing an investigation of Dr. Allen Thomashefsky’s medical office, and is recommending that former patients get tested for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV. The Health Department has received and analyzed information associated with the laboratory test results of former patients. As of May 4, 2015, a total of 248 tests have now been reported. A new case of Hepatitis C has been identified and the cumulative results are as follows:

- 7 patients have tested positive for Hepatitis C
  - Of these 7 patients
    - 6 of these are believed to represent a new, or acute, diagnosis of Hepatitis C
    - 1 is believed to represent a prior, or chronic, infection of Hepatitis C
- 1 patient tested positive for Hepatitis B and has been determined to be a prior, existing infection
- 0 patients have tested positive for HIV
- 240 patients are negative or not infected with Hepatitis B and C, or HIV

As part of the investigation, the Health Department looks for possible causes and for any common characteristics among these cases. So, far the investigation has found that **five (5) of the newly infected Hepatitis C patients had injection procedures performed by Dr. Thomashefsky on the same day.** Our investigation has not identified any other common elements between these 5 patients other than their treatment at Dr. Thomashefsky clinic. All blood samples from the identified cases have been sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for molecular genetic testing. This testing can help determine if the genetic patterns of the hepatitis C virus are similar among infected patients and would support the findings of ongoing investigation.

The infection control breaches witnessed at the office of Dr. Thomashefsky have the potential to be a source of transmission of bloodborne viruses, and were observed on multiple days. As a result, **any** patient treated by Dr. Thomashefsky is considered at risk for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV. Testing is the only way to know if a person is infected.

Anyone seeking more information or anyone wanting to report an abnormal outcome from an office visit to Dr. Thomashefsky can call the information line at 805-681-4373.

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